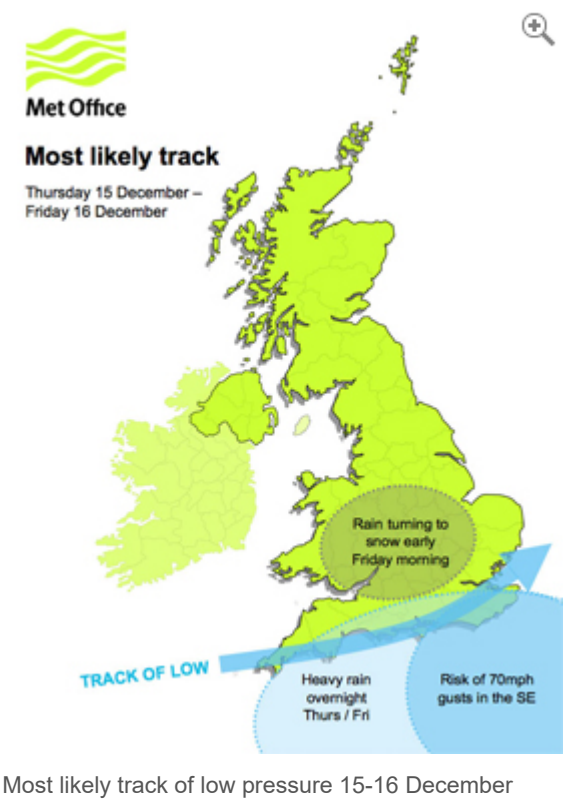
Wintry and unsettled weather into the weekend

14 December 2011 - The prolonged period of unsettled and wintry weather for the UK is set to continue into the weekend.

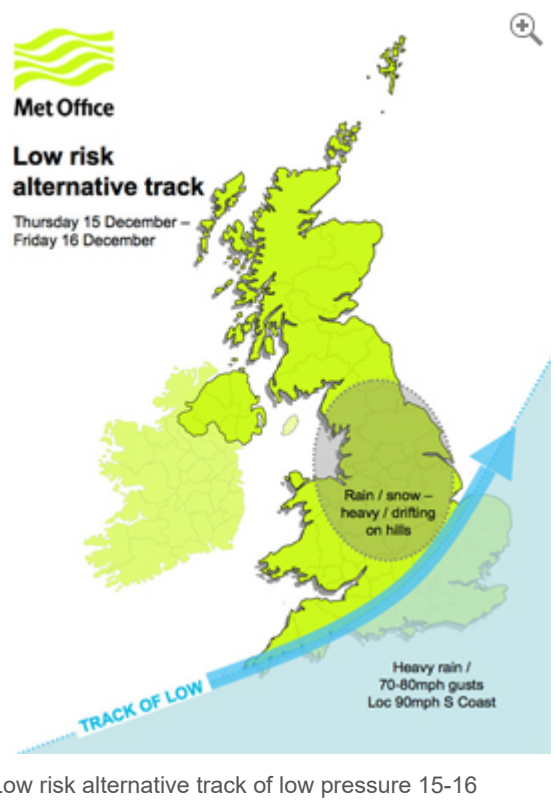
Cold temperatures and rain showers will bring a risk of icy conditions across a large part of the country today and tomorrow, before a storm heads in tomorrow evening.

There is increasing confidence that this Atlantic storm will move along the south coast of England, bringing winds of up to 70mph in this area overnight into Friday.

However, there is still a small chance that the low will move further north, with the risk of strong winds affecting a larger area of the south of England.


Met Office
Most likely track
Thursday 15 December – Friday 16 December
Rain turning to snow early Friday morning
TRACK OF LOW
Heavy rain overnight Thurs / Fri
Risk of 70mph gusts in the SE

Most likely track of low pressure 15-16 December


Met Office
Low risk alternative track
Thursday 15 December – Friday 16 December
Rain / snow – heavy / drifting on hills
TRACK OF LOW
Heavy rain / 70-80mph gusts Loc 90mph S Coast

Low risk alternative track of low pressure 15-16 December 2011

Heavy rain will also feature across the south of the UK as the storm passes through, bringing a risk of surface water flooding.

To the north of the storm, colder air will bring a risk of snow to Wales and parts of central England from the early hours of Friday morning.

The snow is likely to accumulate even at low levels with the risk of up to 10 cm lying over higher ground.

Colder than average temperatures will then carry on through Friday and the weekend, continuing the risk of icy conditions.

Anthony Astbury, Chief Forecaster at the Met Office, said: "The unsettled weather over the next few days could bring a range of hazards across the country, from snow and ice to heavy rain and strong winds.

"We're working closely with government agencies and the resilience community to keep them up to date with the latest information. We'd advise the public to regularly check our latest forecasts and warnings to stay up-to-date with the situation."

Wintry mix of weather for the UK (PDF, 83 kB)

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A wintry mix of weather for the UK

Anthony Astbury – Chief Forecaster

We've been watching this low for several days because it has the potential to spread some quite severe weather across parts of the UK. The actual track of the low will be critical to what type of severe weather we actually get. There's been a lot of variation between different atmospheric models, some actually ran it further north but we're seeing now that the models are beginning to converge and as a result we've got more confidence in the fact that the low is going to take a more southerly track. So what its going to do is its actually going to run along the English channel coasts and this means a threat of severe gales is now confined to the English channel itself and possibly parts of northern France, so it's unlikely that southern England will see severe gales. But just as one threat moves away, another one takes it's place and what we're now seeing is a threat of snow. As we go into the early hours of Friday, as the low engages with the colder air from the North we'll find the rain starts to turn increasingly into snow. We can see here for north Wales there is a signal for some quite heavy snow and then as we go into the early hours of Friday that area of snow is spreading to many parts of the Midlands and possibly up as far as Lincolnshire and the Humberside. Now this could be particularly disruptive snow because what is going to happen is that the rain that precedes it will actually wash off any salt from the roads and then when the snow turns to heavy snow it will accumulate almost instantaneously so although we may only have several hours of snow, it is going to cause maximum disruption. Now the resilience community are aware of this of course and we are keeping them up to date with the very latest information. And also I suggest general public do the same, keep an eye on our website and make sure they've got the latest information on all the warnings that we've issued.

As Fridays snow moves away and we move into the weekend the wintry theme does continue. You see we've got north westerly winds coming down from the north pole and these are going to spread quite cold air across the UK so we'll see a scattering of wintry showers in places, perhaps giving some temporary accumulations of snow, but more importantly what's going to happen over night is there's going to be widespread overnight frost and this is going to lead to icy patches, particularly where there's been a late wintry showers and as we go into the start of next week by Monday I think there's going to be a particularly icy start to the week for many of us.